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The 'Ulama of Farangi Mahall and Islamic Culture in South Asia

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past and his imagery with its tulips and saqis shared in its great tradition. But his inspiration was derived as much from Nietzsche, Bergson, and Schopenhauer as it was from Ghalib, Bedil, and Rumi. Arabian Islam, moreover, was his ideal, not that which had ‘gone astray in the scented rose-gardens of Iran’. He waged war on the ‘Persian encrustation of Islam’, on the pantheistic Sufism of Ibn al-‘Arabi, which robbed Muslims of the ability to move, to act, to overpower the forces of nature.[53] He spoke for those ashraf who had already turned for their religious inspiration towards Arabia. He spoke for those who were grappling with a framework of government which was no longer that of the Perso-Islamic patrimonial systems but that of the modern national state.

As they grappled, the ashraf drew on their memory of the Perso-Islamic past to sustain them in the present. Many recalled that their forebears had come to India to rule. Power, and its management, was in their blood. It was their birthright. This feeling was at the heart of modern Muslim politics as they developed in northern India. It was instinct in the writings of the Aligarh Movement, in the All-India Muslim League’s insistence on the ‘political importance’ of Muslims, in the power-worship which runs through Iqbal’s poetry, and in the development of the demand for Pakistan. While not forgetting the many other elements which helped to give birth to this new state, we would suggest that the emergence of Pakistan was the last striking expression of Perso-Islamic values in India, and one which has been revealed to be, like others in the twentieth century, not without its elements of paradox.

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[53] A.H. Kamali, ‘The Heritage of Islamic Thought’, in Hafeez Malik, ed., *Iqbal: Poet–Philosopher of Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), pp. 211–14.

CHAPTER TWO

Scholarship and Mysticism in Early Eighteenth-Century Awadh[1]

The eighteenth century saw the consolidation of two distinct intellectual and spiritual traditions, the seeds of which had been sown at the height of the Mughal era. The first was that which combined, largely in and around Delhi, the emphasis of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Haqq Muhaddiths (d. 1641) on the study of hadiths with the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya emphasis of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624) on ‘oneness of perception’ (wahdat al-shuhud). It was sustained in the latter half of the seventeenth century most particularly by the emperor Awrangzeb and by the work of Mawlana ‘Abd al-Rahim (d. 1718) in his Delhi madrasa. It was defended with success in the eighteenth century most especially by the Sufi leadership of the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya saint Mazhar Jan-i Janan (d. 1781). The second tradition was that which combined the rationalist scholarship of Iran, transmitted in large part by Fadl Allah Shirazi (d. 1589), with the emphasis on Ibn ‘Arabi’s ‘oneness of being’ (wahdat al-wujud), which had played a substantial role in Sufi thought since the thirteenth century. It was sustained in the seventeenth century by the madrasas of Awadh, which the emperor Shah Jahan called the ‘Shiraz of India’, and also by the Chishti silsilas of the region. It was consolidated in the eighteenth century in its scholarly form by the development of the Dars-i Nizamiyya curriculum at the hands of the Farangi Mahall family and its spiritual form at the hands in particular of the Qadiri Sufi order. Our concern is to study the emergence amongst the ashraf of Awadh of this form of Islam which combined rationalist learning with wujudi spiritual insights.

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[1] Awadh here has not been used in the precise sense of the Mughal subah, but loosely to cover that area and the neighbouring territories to the east and the south—Awadh, in fact, at its greatest extent under the nawabs.

Scholarship

Muslim education was normally divided into two categories, manqulat or the transmitted sciences such as tafsir (exegesis), hadiths (traditions) and fiqh (jurisprudence); and ma‘qulat or the rational sciences such as mantiq (logic), hikmat (philosophy) and kalam (theology). Under the Delhi sultans it would appear that manqulat had dominated the madrasa curriculum. It was not until the time of Sikandar Lodi that extra attention began to be paid to ma‘qulat and key works were added to the curriculum in rhetoric, logic and theology.[2] The status of ma’qulat, however, was transformed by the arrival of Fadl Allah Shirazi at Akbar's court. This remarkable man, according to Bada’uni, was

> the most learned of the learned men of his time. He was for a long time the spiritual guide of the rulers and nobles of Fars. He was thoroughly versed in all those sciences which demand the exercise of the reasoning faculty, such as philosophy, astronomy, geometry, astrology geomancy, arithmetic, the preparation of talismans, incantations and mechanics ... He was equally learned in Arabic, traditions, interpretations of the Qur‘an and rhetoric ...[3]

Fadl Allah had originally been invited to India by Sultan ‘Adil Khan of Bijapur and only after the sultan's death joined Akbar in Fatehpur Sikri. There, according to Ghulam ‘Ali Azad Bilgrami (d.1785), he introduced the works of the great Iranian scholars of ma‘qulat studies, Jalal al-Din Dawwani (d. 1502), Giyath al-Din Mansur Shirazi and Mirza Jan Shirazi, which led to the subsequent study of the contemporary scholars Mir Baqr Damad (d. 1631) and his brilliant pupil

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[2] G.M.D Sufi, *Al-Minhaj: Being the Evolution of Curriculum in the Muslim Educational Institutions of India* (Delhi: 1977), p.33.

[3] Al-Badaoni, *Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh*, vol. 3, ed. and tr. T. Wolseley Haig (Delhi: 1973), p. 216.

and son-in-law, Sadr al-Din Shirazi (d. 1640). Moreover, through his own teaching he encouraged their widespread study and played a key role in their incorporation into the curriculum.[4]

In the seventeenth century this new interest in ma’qulat, and in particular in philosophy, was sustained and further developed. Among those involved were Mulla Mahmud Jawnpuri (d. 1652), who was the foremost philosopher of Shah Jahan's time, a debater of issues in Shiraz with Mir Baqr Damad himself, and the author of the much-valued commentary Shams al-Bazigha;[5] ‘Abd al-Hakim Siyalkoti (d. 1656), who wrote notable commentaries in logic and philosophy; and the brilliant Danishmand Khan of Shiraz (d. 1708) who both shared with François Bernier his exploration of Hindu thought and dabbled in western philosophical writings. [6] Particularly important, however, was the actual transmission of a tradition of ma‘qulat scholarship. Here the key seventeenth-century connections stem from Fadl Allah Shirazi's disciple Mulla ‘Abd al-Salam Lahawri (d. 1627–8), who studied under the Iranian master in the last two years of his life from 1587 to 1589. From Lahawri a direct line of transmission runs through ‘Abd al-Salam of Dewa (d. 1629–30), chief mufti of the Mughal army, and then through Shaykh Daniyal of Chawrasa to Mulla Qutb al-Din of Sihali, whose descendants were to play the major role in consolidating the role of ma‘qulat in the educational curriculum. Indeed, Mulla Qutb al-Din was twice a recipient of Fadl Allah's line as ‘Abd al-Salam of Dewa also taught his father Mulla ‘Abd al-Halim.[7]

What should already be clear from the place names given (Dewa, Sihali, Chawrasa) is the prominence of Awadh in the development and consolidation of this tradition. The eighteenth-century historian, Ghulam ‘Ali Azad Bilgrami, writes of the distinctive qualities of Awadh and Allahabad provinces: villages five to ten miles apart in which noblemen dwell supported in scholarship by kings; mosques, madrasas and khanqahs whose doors are always open; crowds of students come; learning is active. [8] The map below indicates those centres of learning which had achieved prominence by the early eighteenth century. Such centres produced a remarkable series of scholars. Considering scholarship in ma’qulat alone, there was Mawlwi Sayyid Qutb al-Din Amethwi, often known as Shamsabadi (d. 1709–10); Mulla Muhibb Allah Bihari (d. 1707–8); Hafiz Aman Allah Banarsi (d. 1720–1); Ghulam Yahya Bihari (d. 1715); Mulla Naqshband Lakhnawi (d. 1714); Mulla Kamal al-Din Sihalwi (d. 1761); Mulla Nizam al-Din Farangi Mahalli (d. 1748); Mawlana Hamd Allah Sandilwi (d. 1747); and Qazi Mubarak Gopa Mawi (d. 1748). Bilgrami also suggests why there should have been such a flowering: there was patronage both from the Mughal government and from rich men. The painstaking research of Muzzafar Alam bears out part at least of this explanation: there was an unusual number of scholars and scholarly families holding madad-i ma’ash grants in the region. Indeed, the social forces they represented and the friction their claims generated with local zamindars brought substantial problems to Mughal officials. [9]

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[4] S.A.A. Rizvi, *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isna ‘Ashari Shi‘is in India*, vol. 2 (Canberra: 1986), p. 206.

[5] *Shams al-Bazigha* was Jawnpuri's commentary on his own philosophical text.

[6] Rizvi, *Socio-Intellectual History*, vol. 2, pp. 224–6.

[7] Ibid., pp. 207–9.

The descendants of Mulla Qutb al-Din Sihalwi were particularly well placed to consolidate the ma‘qulat tradition, not just because the Mulla was the bearer of the traditions of ma‘qulat scholarship in direct line from Fadl Allah Shirazi but also because of the outcome of a tragedy which derived from the endemic tensions between madad-i ma’ash holders representing central authority and zamindars representing local interests. Mulla Qutb al-Din held a grant in madad-i ma’ash which had first been held by his great-great-grandfather, Mulla Hafiz, in 1559.[10] In 1692 the Mulla, while teaching at his madrasa in Sihali, was murdered by local ‘Usmani Muslim zamindars; two pupils died alongside him and his library of 900 books was burnt. In recompense the emperor Awrangzeb assigned to the Mulla’s four sons a European

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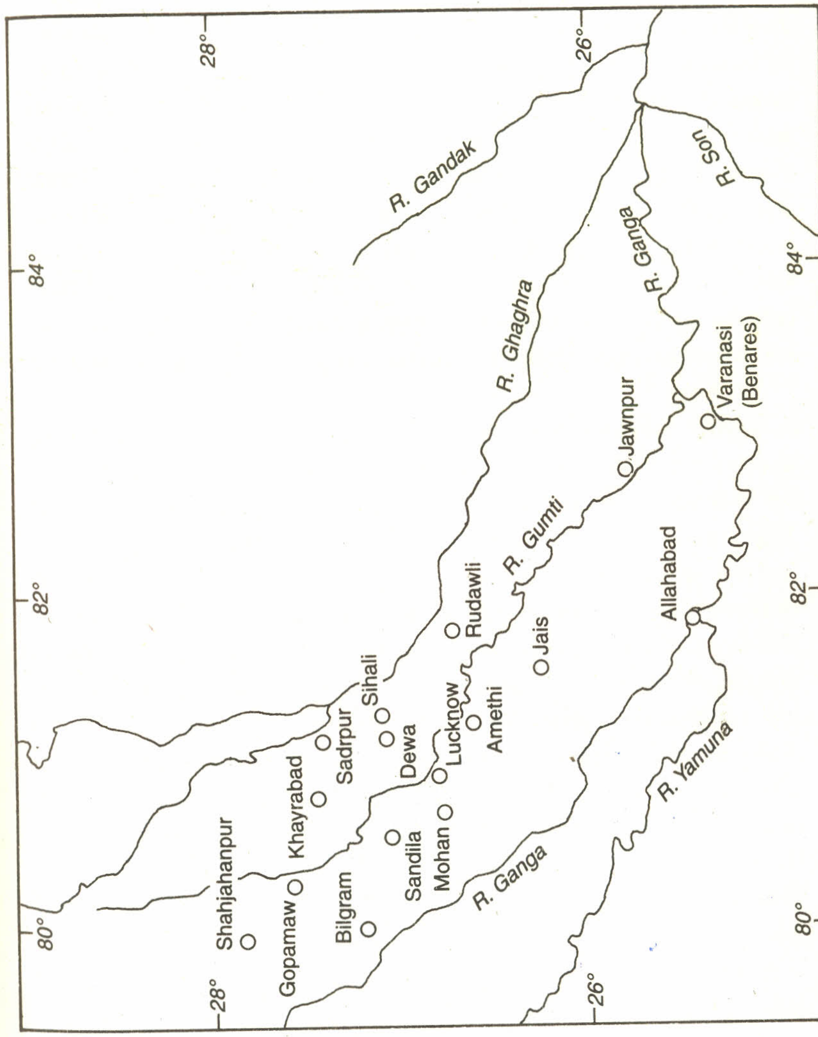
[8] Ghulam ‘Ali Azad Bilgrami’s *Ma‘athir al-Kiram* quoted in S.A.H.Nadwi, *Hindustan ki Qadim Islami Darsgahain* (Azamgarh: 1971), p. 37.

[9] Muzaffar Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India: Awadh and the Punjab 1707–1748* (Delhi: 1986), pp. 110–22.

[10] Mufti Rada Ansari, ‘A Very Early Farman of Akbar’, cyclostyled paper, Centre of Advanced Study, Aligarh Muslim University.



Map Main Centres of Learning in and around Awadh in the early eighteenth century.

merchant's house in Lucknow, and around 1695 the family moved to that house, which was known as Farangi Mahall. Once established in Lucknow the descendants of Mulla Qutb al-Din built up a reputation for teaching and scholarship which attracted students from much of India and abroad. Those who came from outside Lucknow were boarded either with the family or in the city's Tila mosque; their expenses were met in part from the Mughal treasury. While pursuing this work, Mulla Qutb al-Din's third son, Mulla Nizam al-Din, who was the first to preside over the family's fortunes in Lucknow (his older brothers, Mullas Asad and Saʻid, died amongst Awrangzeb's retainers in the Deccan) gave form to a madrasa curriculum which incorporated the new ma'qulat traditions, balancing them against the traditional manqulat subjects. This curriculum was known as the Dars-i Nizamiyya.[11]

Table 1 indicates the changes in emphasis brought about by Nizam al-Din's curriculum. The left-hand column sets out the number of books in each subject that the great eighteenth-century scholar, Shah Wali Allah, recorded he had been taught in his father's Madrasa-yi Rahimiyya in Delhi. The right-hand column shows how different Nizam al-Din's emphases were. For one thing all teaching of Sufism was dropped, a change which we shall try to explain below. For another, significant numbers of books were added in grammar, logic and philosophy. Too much emphasis, however, should not be given to the actual number of books in each subject. Nothing was laid down that all should be taught; teachers introduced books according to the ability of the student. Indeed, Mulla Nizam al-Din's method was to teach the two most difficult books in each subject on the grounds that once they had been mastered the rest would present few problems. This said, the new emphasis on ma'qulat should be clear.

Table 2 sets out the Dars-i Nizamiyya as it was put together by Mulla Nizam al-Din. Research at the moment remains incomplete, but there is enough evidence to reveal how the Mulla's course drew much from the achievements of Iranian and Central Asian scholarship going back over 600 years, as indeed to a lesser extent did that of Shah Wali Allah's father. Table 2 also reveals the dominance of Iranian and Central Asian scholarship in the areas of philosophy, logic and theology, whose teaching the Mulla was particularly concerned to develop. There are, for instance, several works of those giants of Timur's court at Samarqand, Saʻd al-Din Taftazani (d. 1389) and Sayyid Sharif Jurjani (d. 1413); there are the works of later developers of the maʻqulat tradition, Jalal al-Din Dawwani and Sadr al-Din Shirazi. But what, of course, the Table reveals in particular is how the yet further development of ma'qulat scholarship in India itself, and especially in Awadh, has come to be included.

Merely to focus on the seven books from four authors included by Mulla Nizam al-Din, however, does not give a clear enough idea of the deep and almost exclusive immersion of Awadhi scholars in the

Table 1: The Numbers of Books in Each Subject Taught in the Early Eighteenth Century

Subject	Madrasa-yi Rahimiyya	Farangi Mahall
Grammar (*sarf/nahw*)	2	12
Rhetoric (*balaghat*)	2	2
Philosophy (*hikmat*)	1	3
Logic (*mantiq*)	2	11
Theology (*kalam*)	3	3
Jurisprudence (*fiqh*)	2	2
Principles of Jurisprudence (*usul-i fiqh*)	2	3
Traditions (*hadiths*)	3	1
Exegesis (*tafsir*)	2	2
Astronomy and Maths (*riyaziyyat*)	several	5
Medicine (*tibb*)	1	–
Mysticism (*tasawwuf*)	5	–

Source: Sufi *Al-Minhaj*, pp. 68–75

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[11] For these events and their supporting documentation see 'Problems in the History of the Farangi Mahall Family of Learned and Holy Men, *infra*. It is important to note that Awrangzeb's farman which granted the Farangi Mahall mentions just the two eldest sons of Mulla Qutb al-Din, Muhammad Asad and Muhammad Saʻid.

Table 2: The Dars-i Nizamiyya in the Time of Mulla Nizam al-Din

The Transmitted Sciences

GRAMMAR AND SYNTAX (*Sarf wa nahw*)	
Mizan	Muhammad ibn Mustafa who taught in Bursa and Istanbul (d. 1505–6)
Munsha‘ib	
Sarf Mir	Mir Sayyid Sharif Jurjani (d.1413)
Punj Gunj	Mahmud Kashmiri
Zubdah	Zahid ibn Mahmud ibn Mas‘ud Alwi
Fusul-i Akbari	‘Ali Akbar Allahabadi
Shafiyya	Ibn Hajib of Cairo (d.1248)
Nahw Mir	Mir Sayyid Sharif Jurjani
Sharh-i Mi'at 'Amil	Husayn ibn Tawqani (d.1520)
Hidayat al-Nahw	
Kafiyya	Ibn Hajib of Cairo
Shahr Jami	Jami of Herat (d.1492)
RHETORIC (*Balaghat*)	
Mukhtasar	Sa‘d al-Din Taftazani (d.1389)
Mutawwal	Sa‘d al-Din Taftazani
Jurisprudence (*Fiqh*)	
Hidaya	Burhan al-Din Marghinani (d.1196)
Sharh-i Wiqaya	Commentary by Ubayd Allah ibn Mas‘ud (d.1346/7) on *Wiqaya* by his grandfather Taj al-Shari‘a Mahmud.
PRINCIPLES OF JURISPRUDENCE (*Usul-i fiqh*)	
*Nur al-Anwar**	Commentary by Mulla Jiwan of Amethi (d.1718) on ‘Abd Allah Nasafi's (d.1310) *Kitab al-Manar*
Tawzih Talwih	Commentary by Sa‘d al-Din Taftazani on Ubayd Allah ibn Mas‘ud's *Tawzih*
*Musallam al-Thubut**	Muhibb Allah Bihari (d.1707/8)

(*Contd...*)

(*Table 2 contd...*)

Traditions (*Hadiths*)	
Mishkat al-Masabih	Shah Wali al-Din abu ‘Abd Allah al- Khatib
EXEGESIS (*Tafsir*)	
Jalalayn	A commentary in two parts, one by Jalal al-Din Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Shafi‘i (d.1459) and the second by Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (d.1505)
Tafsir Anwar al-Tanzil	Qadi Nasir al-Din Baydawi of Shiraz (d., *c.* 1286)
	Rational Sciences
LOGIC (*Mantiq*)	
Sharh-i Shamsiyya	Najm al-Din ‘Umar ibn ‘Ali Qazwini (d.1099), studied with the help of commentaries by Qutb al-Din Razi (d.1354–5 and Sa‘d al-Din Taftazani.
*Sullam al‘Ulum**	Muhibb Allah Bihari
*Risala Mir Zahid**	Gloss by Mir Muhammad Zahid al-Harawi (d.1699/1700) on Qutb al-Din Mahmud ibn Muhammad's (d.1364) commentary on ‘Ali Qazwini's *Shamsiyya*.
*Mulla Jalal**	Mir Muhammad Zahid al-Harawi's gloss on Jalal al-Din Dawwani's commentary on Sa‘d al-Din Taftazani's *Tahdhib al-Mantiq*
Sughra	Mir Sayyid Sharif Jurjani
Kubra	Mir Sayyid Sharif Jurjani
Isaghoji	Adaptation of Porphyry's *Isagoge* (234-305) by Athir al-Din al-Abhari
Tahdhib	Sa‘d al-Din Taftazani
Sharh-i Tahdhib	Najm al-Din ‘Abd Allah Qazdi's (d.1606) commentary on *Tahdhib*
Qutbi	Qutb al-Din Razi
Mir Qutbi	
PHILOSOPHY (*Hikmat*)	
Sharh Hidayat al-Hikmah	Commentary of Mulla Husayn ibn Mu‘in al-

	Din on Maybudi which was a commentary on Athir al-Din al-Abhari's *Sharh-i Hidaya.*
*Shams al-Bazigha**	Mulla Mahmud Jawnpuri (d.1652)
Sadra	Commentary of Mulla Sadr al-Din Shirazi (d.1641) on the *Kitab Hidaya* by Athir al-Din al-Abhari.
THEOLOGY (*Kalam*)	
Sharh-i Mawaqif	Mir Sayyid Sharif Jurjani's commentary on Qadi 'Adud al-Din of Shiraz's (1355) *Mawaqif.*
*Mir Zahid**	Mir Muhammad Zahid al-Harawi's commentary on Qadi 'Adud al-din of Shiraz's *Mawaqif.*
MATHEMATICS (*Riyaziyyat*)	
Tahrir Uqlidis	Recension of Euclid by Nasir al-Din Tusi (d.1274)
Khulasat al-Hisab	Baha' al-Din 'Amili (d.1621)
Tashrih al-Aflak	Baha' al-Din 'Amili
Risala-i Qushji	'Ala' al-Din Qushji (d.1470)
Sharh-i Chaghmini	Husayn Khwarazmi's Persian translation from Arabic of the *Sharh-i Mulakhkhas* of Mahmud Chaghmini (d.1221).

* Works written in India

Source: Sufi, *Al-Minhaj*, pp. 73–5. Extra information on books in the course has been derived from Mawlana 'Abd al-Bari's discussion of them in Altaf al-Rahman Qidwa'i, *Qiyam-i Nizam-i Ta'lim* (Lucknow: 1924), and extensive discussions during 1980 with Mufti Rada Ansari of Farangi Mahall.

fields at the time. For this we must turn to Table 3 which lists the notes and commentaries written on major texts from the beginning to roughly the middle of the eighteenth century. There is nothing on hadiths or fiqh. There is the odd work on tafsir or tasawwuf. Almost the entire contribution is devoted to the field of ma'qulat. Nine books in the curriculum are commented on, some many times over. Moreover, three of the commentaries written in this period, *Hamd Allah*, *Qadi* and

Table 3: Awadh Scholarship in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century

Scholar	Subject	Commentaries etc. on books in the Dars	Other works in the fields of
Nizam al-Din Farangi Mahalli	*Usul-i Fiqh*	Commentary on *Musallam al-Thubut*	*Usul-i Fiqh* *Mantiq* *Tasawwuf*
	Hikmat	Notes on *Sadra*	
	Mantiq	Commentary on *Sullam al-'Ulum*	
Ghulam Naqshband Lakhnawi	*Hikmat*	Notes on *Maybudi*	*Tafsir* *Tasawwuf*
Kamal al-Din Sihalwi	*Mantiq*	Commentary on *Sullam al-'Ulum* Notes on *Mir Zahid* and *Mulla Jalal*	*Kalam* *Hikmat*
	Kalam	Commentary on *Mir Zahid Sharh Mawaqif*	
Mulla Hasan Farangi Mahalli	*Usul-i Fiqh*	Commentary on *Musallam al-Thubut*	*Mantiq* *Hikmat*
	Mantiq	Commentary on *Sullam al-'Ulum;* Notes on *Shams al-Bazigha;* Notes on *Risala Mir Zahid;* Notes on *Mir Zahid Mulla Jalal*	
	Hikmat	Notes on *Sadra*	
Barkat Allah Allahabadi	*Kalam*	Commentary on *Mir Zahid Sharh Mawaqif*	*Kalam*
	Usul-i Fiqh	Commentary on *Musallam al-Thubut*	
Hamd Allah Sandilwi	*Hikmat*	Notes on *Maybudi;* Notes on *Shams al-Bazigha*	

(Contd....)

(Table Contd.)

Scholar	Subject	Commentaries etc. on books in the Dars	Other works in the fields of
	Mantiq	Commentary on *Sullam al-‘Ulum*	
Qadi Mubarak Gopa Mawi	*Mantiq*	Notes on *Mir Zahid Mulla Jalal* Commentary on *Sullam al-‘Ulum*	*Kalam*
Ahmad Allah Sandilwi	*Mantiq*	Commentary on *Sullam al-‘Ulum;* Notes on *Risala Mir Zahid;* Notes on *Mir Zahid Mulla Jalal*	
‘Alim Sandilwi	*Hikmat* *Mantiq*	Notes on *Sadra* Notes on *Mir Zahid Mulla Jalal*	*Usul-i Fiqh*

Source: The information for this table is derived from Mawlana Fadl-i Imam Khayrabadi, *Tarajim al-Fudala*, edited by Mufti Intizamullah Shihabi, with an English translation and additional notes by A.S. Bazmee Ansari (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1956).

Mulla Hasan (all on Muhibb Allah Bihari’s *Sullam al-‘Ulum*) were to become fixtures in the Dars in the second half of the century.

Not surprisingly the world of ma’qulat scholarship in Awadh was intimately interconnected. Almost all those cited in Table 2, or mentioned in the list of notable scholars in Table 3, were linked by those very strong associations for Muslims in the pre-modern age of teacher and pupil. Mulla Qutb al-Din Sihalwi taught Hafiz Aman Allah Banarsi, Muhibb Allah Bihari, Qutb al-Din Amethwi and Mulla Nizam al-Din. The young Mulla was also taught by Hafiz Aman Allah and Ghulam Naqshband Lakhnawi, and in his turn taught Kamal al-Din Sihalwi, Barkat Allah Allahabadi, Hamd Allah Sandilwi and Muhammad ‘Alim Sandilwi. Mulla Kamal al-Din in his turn also taught Muhammad ‘Alim Sandilwi and Mulla Hasan of Farangi Mahall, and Hamd Allah in his turn taught Ahmad Allah Sandilwi. As Ghulam ‘Ali Azad Bilgrami was to say towards the end of the century: almost all the silsilas of teaching in India go back to Mulla Qutb al-Din Sihalwi.[12]

The significance of the enhanced emphasis on ma’qulat in the Dars-i Nizamiyya lies in part in the superior training it offered prospective lawyers, judges and administrators. The study of advanced books of logic, philosophy and dialectics sharpened the rational faculties and, ideally, brought to the business of government men with better-trained minds and better-formed judgement. That this curriculum began to take shape in the first place—for of course it was in the process of formation before it was crystallized by Mulla Nizam al-Din—cannot merely be a tribute to the intellectual curiosity of Awadhi scholars but also to the fact that the skills it offered were in demand from the increasingly sophisticated and complex bureaucratic systems of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century India. That it was taken up also owes something to the speedier training it offered the student; the emphasis on the development of reasoning skills meant an emphasis on understanding rather than merely rote learning. It enabled a good student to complete his studies by the time he was sixteen or seventeen.

The emphasis of the Dars on training capable administrators for Muslim states rather than specialists in ‘religion’ *per se* may explain the dropping of mysticism from the course. Knowledge of Sufism was not what trainee administrators wanted. Such knowledge as they did want they could always go and seek at the feet of a pir, and in doing so they had the advantage of their extensive training in the rational sciences to help them penetrate the world of Ibn ‘Arabi and higher religious understanding. The lack of books on Sufism certainly did not mean any opposition on the part of Mulla Nizam al-Din and his family to the spiritual dimensions of Islam. As we shall see, they were, almost without exception, devout Sufis and no student could have sat at their feet without being aware of this. Indeed, for them, as for al-Ghazali or Sadr al-Din Shirazi, the ideal scholar was one in whom formal learning and spiritual development went hand in hand. It may well be significant that in the late nineteenth century, when the demand for men trained in the Dars-i Nizamiyya had greatly declined, books on mysticism—the *Fusus* and the *Mathnawi* —were again included in the curriculum.[13]

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[12] Mufti Rada Ansari quotes Bilgrami in *Bani-yi Dars-i Nizami* (Lucknow, 1973).

The significance of the enhanced emphasis on ma'qulat must lie in part, too, in the religious understanding that it could help to foster. It could help for instance, to develop opposition to dogmatic and extreme religion, which was always to be the way of the Farangi Mahallis. It was also, through the introduction it offered to the sophisticated religious approaches that existed in the ma'qulat tradition, to bring the continued possibility of a truly understanding interaction with other religious traditions in the region, whether Shi'a or Hindu, as it had done in the seventeenth century in the person of the unfortunate prince, Dara Shikoh. Research has not yet indicated the extent to which the scholars of eighteenth-century Awadh, or northern India more generally, took on the full body of ideas available in the Iranian ma'qulat tradition. Nevertheless, it is worth considering for a moment the possible importance of the work of Sadr al-Din Shirazi (Mulla Sadra), the zenith of the philosophical scholarship of Safawid Iran.

There is no doubt that Sadra was read and pondered upon quite widely. One of his commentaries was included in the Dars-i Nizamiyya, as we have seen, and formed the subject of further glosses by scholars in both the Awadhi and the Delhi traditions, among them Mulla Nizam al-Din and Shah Wali Allah's son, Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz. His views were the subject of debate between those two intellectual giants of late-eighteenth-century Lucknow, Sayyid Dildar 'Ali (Gufran Ma'ab) and Mawlana 'Abd al-'Ali (Bahr al-'Ulum). Moreover, his great work, *al-Asfar al-Arba'a* (The Four Journeys), so S.A.A. Rizvi tells us, was studied by advanced students of philosophy from the seventeenth century onwards.[14] We are considering, therefore, a scholar whose ideas should have had some purchase on the intellectual elite.

If this was the case, they were encountering a philosopher whose work began from the experience of 'transcendence', the ultimate apprehension of the unity of the experienced 'self' and 'being'.[15] He was a man fundamentally concerned both with the dialectical interplay between experience and transcendence (enlightenment—the apprehension of Truth, *al-Haqq*) and with the journey towards it, a journey which not just Muslims were making but the whole of humanity. He suggested that people in different circumstances, in different civilisations, all sought enlightenment, but the expression of that enlightenment depended on the social, cultural and historical context in which they dwelt. He was, of course, deeply influenced by Ibn 'Arabi's philosophy of the oneness of being (wahdat al-wujud), used much of his allusive language, and was particularly concerned to rebut crude understandings of his ideas which, by ignoring the tension between ordinary human perception and the condition of transcendence, reduced them to forms of 'monism' or 'pantheism'.[16]

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[13] Altaf al-Rahman Qidwa'i, *Qiyam-i Nizam-i Ta'lim* (Lucknow: 1924), pp. 52–3; current Farangi Mahall tradition suggests, however, that the teaching of tasawwuf in the *Dars* was reserved for members of the family.

[14] Rizvi, *Socio-Intellectual History*, 2, pp. 216–19.

[15] Morris usefully describes the characteristics of Sadra's 'transcendence' thus: 'a condition of intrinsic finality, completion, fulfilment, and inner peace (compatible with the most intensive activity); a unique sense of unity, wholeness, and communion (with no ultimate separation of subject and object); a distinctive suspension (or warping or extension) of our usual perceptions of time and space; where nature is involved, a vision of all being as essentially alive (in a way quite different from our usual distinction of animate and inanimate entities); a sense of profound inner freedom and liberation (or, negatively stated, the absence of anxiety, guilt or regret); a perception of universal, nonjudgmental love or compassion, extending to all beings; a paradoxical sense of 'ek-stasis', or standing beyond and encompassing the ongoing flow of particular events (including the actions of one's 'own' body).' James Winston Morris, *The Wisdom of the Throne: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mulla Sadra* (Princeton, 1981), p. 9.

[16] Morris, *Wisdom of the Throne*, pp. 8–11, 26–9.

Mysticism

From the early days of Muslim settlement in Awadh and east Uttar Pradesh during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Chishtiyya were pre-eminent amongst the Sufi orders of the region. It was at this time that many of the great shrines were established: Jawnpur where lies ‘Abd al-Muqtadir (d. 1389); Manikpur, the resting place of Jalal al-Din and his son Hisam al-Din (d. 1449–50); Kichawcha, that of ‘Ala’ al-Dawla Simnani (d. 1436–7); Rudawli, that of Ahmad ‘Abd al-Haqq (d. 1434); and Lucknow, that of Shah Mina (d. 1465). In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this Chishti pre-eminence continued. There were figures such as Nizam al-Din Amethwi (d. 1571–2), whose remarkable powers were noticed by Bada’uni, and his pupil, Shaykh Sufi, who taught the emperor Jahangir’s son, Prince Khurram; Shaykh Jalil of Lucknow (d. 1633–4), a great believer in wahdat al-wujud; Shah Pir Muhammad (d. 1669–70), whose cell in Lucknow was where the Tila Mosque now stands overlooking the river Gomti; and of course Shah Muhibb Allah of Allahabad (d. 1648), the spiritual confidant of Dara Shikoh, interpreter of Ibn ‘Arabi, and his greatest defender. In the early eighteenth century, when Azad Bilgrami tells us Sufi khanqahs were to be found a few miles apart throughout the region, the majority of them were of the Chishti silsila.[17]

Shah Muhibb Allah of Allahabad requires rather more attention as, during the early eighteenth century, his legacy did much to set the style of the new Sufi activity in Awadh. This most prolific of Chishti authors claimed descent on his father’s side from Baba Farid Shakur Ganj and on his mother’s side from the learned family of Hargam which produced Qadi ’Abd Mulla Abul of Hargam, Awrangzeb’s tutor. Born at Sadrpur near Khayrabad in Awadh, he found his spiritual vocation at the feet of Abu Sa‘id Gangohi, grandson of ‘Abd al-Quddus Gangohi, the Chishti-Sabiri saint who gave Ibn ‘Arabi’s ideas wide circulation in India. Later, after spending time at Sadrpur[18] and at the

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[17] S.A.A. Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 2 (Delhi: 1983), pp. 287–94.

[18] ‘Scholars differ as to whether Shah Muhibb Allah’s Sadrpur was near Allahabad or Khayrabad. The better case seems to be that for Khayrabad. See Hafiz Mohd. Tahir Ali, ‘Shaikh Muhibullah of Allahabad—Life and Times’, *Islamic Culture*, 47, 1973, pp. 241–56.

khanqah of Ahmad ‘Abd al-Haqq Rudawlwi, he settled in Allahabad. Two facts connect him with the rationalist tradition of scholarship in eighteenth-century Awadh: first, he had his formal education from ‘Abd al-Salam Lahawri, which attaches him to that crucial chain of learning which stretches from Fadl Allah Shirazi to Mulla Qutb al-Din Sihalwi; and second, his first spiritual successor was Qadi Sadr al-Din of Allahabad (known as Ghasi) whose spiritual successor was the same Mulla Qutb al-Din Sihalwi.

Shah Muhibb Allah’s notable achievement was his interpretation and defence of Ibn ‘Arabi’s theory of the oneness of being. This theory had been under attack in India from the early fifteenth century, when disciples of ‘Ala’ al-Dawla Simnani in Iran brought his criticism of it to the circle of Sayyid Muhammad Gesu Daraz. Two centuries later, the assault was carried forward with a vengeance by Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624), who claimed to have passed beyond the ecstasy of wahdat al-wujud (oneness of being) to the sobriety of wahdat al-shuhud (oneness of perception). He argued that belief in wahdat al-wujud, which involved a total rejection of the external and acceptance only of the reality of the One Being, was against reason and the shari’a, whereas belief in wahdat al-shuhud, which involved only the perception of the One, did not transgress reason or the shari’a. This assault was continued after Sirhindi’s death by Mulla Mahmud of Jawnpur and his circle. Shah Muhibb Allah responded by writing a series of commentaries on the *Fusus* in Arabic and Persian, of which the most controversial and most widely ready was his *Taswiyya* (Making Equal). The Shah declared to those who asserted that Ibn ‘Arabi’s ideas bred heresy and atheism that a proper understanding of the *Fusus* and the *Futuhat* could only make a man follow the Prophet more closely and the shari’a more firmly.[19] Assessing Shah Muhibb Allah’s seventeenth-century achievement, Mawlana ‘Abd al-Bari Farangi Mahalli declared that the Shah solved the problems which lay between one party which denied wahdat al-wujud altogether, regarding what was apparent as the ultimate objective, and another party which was so involved in wahdat al-wujud that it ignored the shari’a, favouring instead singing, dancing and physical love. ‘Abd al-Bari’s implication is that the Shah had promoted a middle way between two extremes.[20]

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[19] Tahir Ali, ‘Shaikh Muhibullah’, p. 252, see also, Rizvi, *Sufism*, vol. 2, pp. 268–71.

This, then, was the background—one of Chishti dominance and of the rehabilitated thought of Ibn 'Arabi—against which mysticism existed in early eighteenth-century Awadh. The key development in the period was the emergence of a dynamic Qadiri saint, Sayyid Shah 'Abd al-Razzaq (1636–1724), who settled at Bansa, some twenty-eight miles from Lucknow. 'Abd al-Razzaq was the grandson of a soldier from Badakshan, who had been given a mansab by the Mughals and played a part in putting down the Rajput zamindars of Daryabad and Rudawli. His father, however, fell on hard times and so the young Sayyid was forced to serve as a common soldier. In Gujarat he was initiated into the Qadiriyya by Mir Sayyid 'Abd al-Samad Khudanuma and from there returned to the region around Bansa where his mother's relatives, the great Qidwa'i clan, lived. From here, despite the opposition of these powerful local zamindars to his presence and growing reputation, he was able to lead a powerful Qadiri initiative which was the most vital mystical movement in the region at the time. His twenty-three immediate successors (khulafa) included at least three members of the Qidwa'i family and six of the Farangi Mahall family. Some were assigned to a province (wilayat), others went of their own volition to places outside Awadh which included Shahjahanpur, Amroha, Naini Tal, Rampur, the Panjab and Murshidabad. Silsilas from nine out of twenty-three successors of the saint have been traced. They embrace a substantial chunk of the Sufi life of India in the subsequent three centuries, including for instance almost all the Farangi Mahall family; the great Lucknow saint of the early nineteenth century, Sufi Shah 'Abd al-Rahman; that doughty champion of popular Islam in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Mawlana Rada Khan Barelwi; Hajji Warith 'Ali Shah of Dewa; and so on. As might be expected, the 'urs of the saint of Bansa was, in the early twentieth century, one of the major gatherings of Indian Sufis.[21]

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[20] Mawlana Mawlawi Muhammad Qiyam al-Din 'Abd al-Bari, *Malfuz-i Razzaqi* (Kanpur: 1926), p. 16.

[21] For the silsilas of the successors of Sayyid Shah 'Abd al-Razzaq, see Muhi al-Din Qadiri al-Razzaqi, *Shijra Bai'at wa Khilafat* (Bara Banki: 1977).

Enough has been said to indicate the special relationship which existed, and as it happens still exists, between the holy family of Bansa and the learned family of Farangi Mahall. Indeed, the Farangi Mahallis have a charming story amongst their traditions explaining how they found their Qadiri saint and how the transfer of family allegiance from the Chishti silsila took place:

> Mulla Qutb al-Din Sihalwi was a Khalifa of Hadrat Qadi Sadr al-Din Ghasi Allahabadi, and Hadrat Qadi Sadr al-Din Ghasi Allahabadi was a Khalifa of Shah Muhibb Allah Allahabadi. After Mulla Qutb al-Din was martyred, and after Mulla Nizam al-Din finished his schooling, and his nephew Ahmad 'Abd al-Haqq, son of Mulla Sa'id, also finished his schooling, both men were in search of a Shaykh. In the same night both had a vision that they were at the court of Shah 'Abd al-Qadir Gilani, and Mu'in al-Din Chishti was also there. They stood in a respectful manner. Hadrat Gilani said to Khwaja Mu'in al-Din, 'Give them to me', and Khwaja Mu'in al-Din led them before Gilani. Thereupon 'Abd al-Qadir Gilani handed them to someone behind him. They saw his face and when they woke up told their dreams to each other, and found that their stories were similar.[22]

The same source continues this story in a different text:

> Sayyid 'Abd al-Razzaq often visited the tomb of Shah Dost Muhammad, alias Shah Dosi. One day on his way there he stopped in the Tila Mosque where there was the Khanqah of Shah Ghulam Naqshband and the grave of Hadrat Shah Pir Muhammad. Students were also staying in the mosque, amongst them those of Mulla Nizam al-Din. They told the Mulla tales of 'Abd al-Razzaq's spiritual powers. The Mulla asked them what the man looked like and found him similar to the man he had seen in his dream in the presence of Hadrat 'Abd al-Qadir Gilani and Khwaja Mu'in al-Din Chishti. Mulla Nizam al-Din went to him, and so did Mulla Ahmad 'Abd al-Haqq. Both recognised him as the man of their dreams and became his disciples.[23]

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[22] 'Abd al-Bari, *Malfuz-i Razzaqi*, pp. 16–17.

[23] Mawlana Mawlawi Muhammad Qiyam al-Din 'Abd al-Bari, *'Urs-i Hazrat-i Bansa* (Lucknow: n.d.), pp. 15–16.

A passionate relationship developed between the founder of the new Qadiri movement in Awadh and the consolidator of the ma‘qulat tradition of learning. Mulla Nizam al-Din would walk barefoot to visit his shaykh in Bansa; the shaykh would sense his impending arrival exclaiming, ‘one who believes and does good deeds is coming’.[24] Farangi Mahallis honoured the saint of Bansa by asking him to inaugurate their mosque and by reserving the topmost step of the minbar for him to preach from. The family of Bansa in turn gave the Farangi Mahallis the greatest honours amongst those gathered to celebrate the ‘urs of the saint. The seal of the relationship was set by Mulla Nizam al-Din’s authorship of the most authoritative text on the life and sayings of Sayyid Shah ‘Abd al-Razzaq, the Manaqib-i Razzaqiyya.[25]

By examing Mulla Nizam al-din’s text we can see some of the concerns and some of the Islamic emphases of Sayyid Shah ‘Abd al-Razzaq and those who moved in his world. Geographically, Nizam al-Din’s malfuzat collection finds ‘Abd al-Razzaq in two areas: first, Broach, Ahmadabad and Malegaon, where he did service as a soldier, and second the towns and qasbahs of Awadh and its neighbouring territories—Lucknow, Allahabad, Mohan, Bilgram, Amethi, Dewa, Rudawli, Sihali, etc.—where he devoted himself fully to his spiritual vocation. In western India, he operated beneath the mystic aegis of Mir Sayyid ‘Abd al-Samad Khudanuma, but in the Awadhi world he was very aware of his position as an interloper on Chishti territory. One prospective disciple from Mohan found that his respect for ‘Khandan-i Chishti’ stood in his way until ‘Abd al-Razzaq admitted that Khwaja Mu‘in al-Din Chishti had given him permission in a spiritual encounter to make disciplies in his silsila.[26] Then, when faced with a request for discipleship in Rudawli, he felt that he must ask permission from the presiding

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[24] Ibid., p. 11; Mulla Nizam al-Din, *Manaqib-i Razzaqiyya*, Urdu trans. Sibghat Allah Shahid Farangi Mahalli (Lucknow: n.d.), p. 30.

[25] Mulla Nizam al-Din’s *Manaqib-i Razzaqiyya* was of course originally in Persian. The edition used here is the Urdu translation made by Sibghat Allah Shahid Farangi Mahalli (Lucknow: n.d.) but probably in the 1930s or 1940s. The translation was made at the request of the sajjada at Bansa, Sayyid Shah Mumtaz Ahmad Razzaqi.

[26] Nizam al-Din, *Manaqib*, pp. 9–10.

spiritual presence of the qasbah, Ahmad ‘Abd al-Haqq.[27] We can see from these anecdotes the origins of the Farangi Mahalli traditions regarding their first association with the saint of Bansa. There can be no doubt, moreover, that such good manners in spiritual matters paid off; in Bansa itself ‘Abd al-Razzaq felt he had real cause to be grateful for the protection of an earlier established saint, Salar Ahmad.[28]

A good part of Nizam al-Din’s text is concerned to emphasise, as one might expect, the primacy of ‘Abd al-Razzaq’s spiritual concerns over material ones. This is seen in his relationships with other holy men; he had, for instance, complete disdain for those absorbed in the transmutation of base metals into gold.[29] It is seen, too, in his relations with ‘ulama; those arrogant in their command of formal Islamic knowledge are shamed by the depth of his spiritual understanding, a shaming made much worse by the fact that the saint was illiterate.[30] Then, he is in his attitude to government service, and involvement with government officials, the equal of any diehard follower of the Chishti way. He himself left service because it interfered with his spiritual life. His last words to his eldest son, Ghulam Dost Muhammad, were that ‘he should remain firmly on the path and never think of winning his livelihood from noblemen or government officials’.[31] And then when a man came to him in a fit of great depression ‘Abd al-Razzaq analysed his problem; he had been appointed a qadi. The solution was to forego all government posts in future. ‘Dogs’, he said ‘are qadis.’[32]

A further concern, and one which has an enduring place in the history of Muslim piety, was the distraction which women presented to a man’s higher spiritual concerns. When fellow soldiers persuaded a prostitute to lie beside ‘Abd al-Razzaq as he slept, he dreamed that a bitch was sleeping with him and woke in time to save himself from sin. When attracted to a beautiful woman, he dreamed that Hadrat Abu

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[27] Ibid., p. 10.

[28] Ibid., p. 50.

[29] Ibid., p. 39–40.

[30] Ibid., pp. 25, 31.

[31] Ibid., pp. 6–7.

[32] Ibid., p. 57.

Baqr stared at him, amazed and angry.[33] A dacoit, on the other hand, whom 'Abd al-Razzaq made to mend his ways through the power of his glance, was not so fortunate. He was thus brought to a state of spiritual development so high that 'he forgot all the pleasures of the world and lost himself completely in God'. His womenfolk, starving because they had lost their sole breadwinner, came to 'Abd al-Razzaq screaming abuse. 'There is nothing new about it', Mulla Nizam al-Din comments,

> because women generally are lacking in intellect and faith. In olden times whatever calamities have taken place have been due to such female fools. It was because of them that Pharaoh was sunk with all his treasure, the community of Lot destroyed and exalted apostles of God like Zachariah and John killed; through their mischief Joseph was thrown into a well, and they took the lives of the maternal grandsons of the Prophet, Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn. As everyone knows, it was all the handiwork of women. Thus the women of the dacoit's household said many silly things and showed much anger at the renunciation of the world by the dacoit until traces of displeasure also began to appear on the forehead of Shah 'Abd al-Razzaq.[34]

In reply the saint brought the dacoit out of his ecstatic state and returned him to his former miserable condition. He tried to commit suicide; the saint ignored him. Nevertheless, from now on he lived a life within the law and observed the requirements of Islam.

A rather more important strand involves the influence of 'Ibn 'Arabi, which can be seen both in the spiritual example given by 'Abd al-Razzaq and in the spiritual understandings of Mulla Nizam al-Din, as they are offered to us in the text. Thus, 'Abd al-Razzaq draws on Ibn 'Arabi's interpreation in the *Fusus* of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac, which is that Abraham dreamed that he saw Isaac in the form of a ram, to explain the distance which might exist between a holy man's inspiration (ilham) and actual fact, and more generally the difficulties of understanding the deeds of holy men.[35] Furthermore, Mulla Nizam

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[33] Ibid., p. 43.
[34] Ibid., pp. 52–5.
[35] Ibid., pp. 21–2.

al-Din includes an anecdote relating 'Abd al-Razzaq's encounter with a 'whacky' faqir in Broach which, although it ultimately has the purpose of demonstrating the spiritual power which 'Abd al-Razzaq drew from his shaykh, also indicates how he stood apart from the cruder understanding of wahdat al-wujud:

> Once while he was going to Broach he met a faqir who on seeing him said: 'Come Allah Miyan'. It was the practice of the faqir to call everything by the name of Allah. Shah 'Abd al-Razzaq then went and sat beside him. The faqir then said, pointing towards a horse: 'Oh Allah remove the saddle and the bridle of that horse'. Shah 'Abd al-Razzaq did so, tied its legs and left it to graze. The faqir then said to 'Abd al-Razzaq: 'Allah is eating Allah', and jumped with joy. He then said to 'Abd al-Razzaq: 'you too say that everything is Allah'. Shah 'Abd al-Razzaq replied: 'this is not my state [hal]'.[36]

Given the pantheistic potential that many found in Ibn 'Arabi, not to forget the religious relativism encouraged by Mulla Sadra's thought, considerable interest attaches to what Nizam al-Din's text tells of 'Abd al-Razzaq's relations with Hindus. In fact, they are not often mentioned. At one time, 'Abd al-Razzaq is attracted to a Hindu boy.[37] At another he delights in an anecdote which reveals the materialism of a Hindu yogi.[38] Beyond such references there is just one point at which 'Abd al-Razzaq is asked to resolve a problem which requires a fine distinction between an Islamic and a Hindu understanding. Mulla Kamal al-Din Sihalwi was very worried about the transmigration of souls (tanasuh), because Muslim jurists repudiated it so strongly, yet some Sufis held it to be possible. So he asked Shah 'Abd al-Razzaq to use his inspirational powers to say what the correct postion was. The saint replied that a person could remain alive after death for as long as Allah wished, but could not be reborn in another human frame.[39] There is no evidence in the *Manaqib-i Razzaqiyya* for the conclusions that S.A.A. Rizvi draws from it that Sayyid Shah ‘Abd al-Razzaq showed reverence for Krishna or helped Hindu yogis make spiritual contact with him.[40]

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[36] Ibid., p. 44.
[37] Ibid., p. 64.
[38] Sayyid Shah 'Abd al-Razzaq is also pleased by the shock of the yogi's Hindu disciple at discovering his master's materialism: 'I have not fastened myself to your skirt to learn about such worthless things.' Ibid., p. 19.
[39] Ibid., p. 38

A final significant strand in the text follows on from the distinction between what was Islamic and non-Islamic in the case of the transmigration of souls. It is Mulla Nizam al-Din's concern to emphasise that for ‘Abd al-Razzaq God's word was paramount and the duties He required were obligatory, with perhaps one exception. So Shah ‘Abd al-Razzaq shows his pleasure when the host at a qawwali concert upbraids his guests for going into ecstasy when they hear songs in Hindi but not when they hear verses from the Qur'an.[41] So, too, he praises a disciple who fasts during a very hot monsoon Ramadan while travelling for several days from his home town to Bansa. When Mulla Nizam al-Din remonstrates that Ibn ‘Arabi's *Futuhat* forbids fasting in such circumstances, his pir reminds him that keeping the fast is a very good thing.[42] Nevertheless, there was one area of behaviour which caused Mulla Nizam al-Din, the ‘alim, some concern, and that was ‘Abd al-Razzaq's neglect of regular prayer. He recounts a couple of brushes that the saint had with ‘ulama on the matter and concludes ‘that it is not yet possible to

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[40] S.A.A. Rizvi makes these claims in *Sufism*, vol. 2, pp. 20–1, 396–8; so does K.H. Qadiri in *Hasrat Mohani* (Delhi: 1985), pp. 16–17. Both refer to the *Manaqib-i Razzaqiyya*, but in neither case do they mention the manuscript or edition they use, and in the latter there is no page reference. In the edition used for this article there is no support for such claims, although there could, of course, have been some careful editing. However, the leading expert on the Farangi Mahall family and on that of Bansa, Mufti Rada Ansari of Farangi Mahall, assured me in a communication of August 1986 there there is no single reference to Krishna, or indeed Ramchandra, in the Persian text of Nizam al-Din's *Manaqib-i Razzaqiyya*, nor in the later edition of it by a very fine Farangi Mahalli scholar, Mulla Muhammad Wali Allah (d. 1853), which has some important additions and runs under the title: *Umdate al-Wasail lin Najat*, Persian ms. Again, while the Urdu text supports Sayyid Shah ‘Abd al-Razzaq's respect for Hadrat ‘Ali, and Hadrat Hasan and Hadrat Husayn, there is nothing it to suggest the saint's respect for ta‘ziyas: Rizvi, *Sufism*, vol. 2, pp. 147–8. These, we note, only find corroboration in Nawab Muhammad Khan Shahjahanpuri's two texts of the late-eighteenth or early-nineteenth century, *Malfuz-i Razzaqi* (Lucknow: 1313 A.H.) and *Karamat-i Razaqiyya* (Hardoi: 1319 A.H.)

[41] Nizam al-Din, *Manaqib*, p. 19.

[42] Ibid., p. 24.

explain the apparent negligence of Shah ‘Abd al-Razzaq regarding the five regular prayers’. However, he does offer two suggestions. The first is that the saint had a unique absorption in God which could be disturbed when others moved about him, which was why he often delayed prayer beyond the prescribed time. The second is that he offered prayers with his heavenly body and therefore did not feel it necessry to offer the same prayer again with his earthly body.[43] Whatever the actual reason, Mulla Nizam al-Din makes it clear that in the Bansa tradition observance of the shari'a was of great importance.

This said, it should be made clear that Mulla Nizam al-Din's understanding of the Banswi tradition does not embrace the whole of it. There was another dimension expressed in Nawab Muhammad Khan Shahjahanpuri's two malfuzat collections, *Malfuz-i Razzaqi* and *Karamat-i Razzaqi*, the latter of which was dictated to the Nawab by Sayyid Shah Ghulam ‘Ali Banswi (d. 1807), Sayyid ‘Abd al-Razzaq's youngest grandson. This dimension demonstrates a concern not just for Nizam al-Din's emphasis on respect for the shari'a but also for harmony amongst the religions of the region. It is expressed in a story relating to ‘Abd al-Razzaq's respect for ta'ziyas, the replicas of the tomb of Husayn brought out by Shi‘as, but also by others, for Muharram processions. It is expressed even more strongly in many incidents relating to his interaction with the Hindu religious world; the respect he had for it and the respect he received from it. So he would be present at Diwali celebrations and watch bakhtiyas performing the life of Krishna; he would have visions of Ram and Lakshman; and Krishna would send his salam to him. In this dimension, as Muzaffar Alam says, Hindu gods ‘were also his friends and thereby the well-wishers of all of his disciples and followers amongst the Muslims as well’.[44]

We need to explain the differences in the Banswi traditions as expressed by Mulla Nizam al-Din and Shahjahanpuri. One point is that Shahjahanpuri's version was written down probably rather more than half a century after Mulla Nizam al-Din’s, and quite understandably the saint of Bansa’s guidance came to reflect the concerns of that later age, in which Shi‘a political power was a fact of life in Awadh, and therefore to include the saint’s respect for ta’ziyas. A second point involves the constituencies of the different malfuzat collections. While the Banswi tradition as recorded by Mulla Nizam al-Din spoke the concerns of urban ‘ulama who were profoundly aware of the ways of their zamindar cousins, that recorded by Shahjahanpuri reflected the concerns of Muslims in a countryside where Hindus formed a large majority, a location in which respect for the shari‘a had to run alongside, even interact with, respect for Hindu religious tradition. It would seem that for all the possibilities for broad religious understanding, indeed for indulging in forms of religious relativism, presented by ma’qulat learning and the wujudi tradition, for Mulla Nizam al-Din, although he might show a tolerant face to the world, there was no real possibility of building the bridge of religious sharing between Islam and Hinduism.

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[43] Ibid., pp. 33–4. Muzaffar Alam also emphasises this point in ‘Religion and Politics in Awadh Society: Seventeenth and Early-Eighteenth Centuries’, in Anna Libera Dallapiccola and Stephanie Zingel-Ave Lallemant, eds, *Islam and Indian Regions*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: 1993), p. 344.

[44] Alam, ‘Religion and Politics’, p. 346.

Mulla Nizam al-Din and Sayyid Shah ‘Abd al-Razzaq were the two greatest figures of early eighteenth-century Awadh. The Mulla was not just the consolidator of the Iranian and Central Asian traditions of rationalist scholarship, which had grown so vigorously on Awadhi soil, he was also the recipient in the traditions of his family of a reformed understanding of Ibn ‘Arabi from Shah Muhibb Allah Ilahabadi. The saint by all accounts was a man of immense spiritual authority. The relationship between them, the mingling of the religious and spiritual understandings—and here we recognise that Mulla Nizam al-Din almost entirely moulds our vision of his pir—was a major event. On the one hand, it meant that the work of the descendants of Mulla Qutb al-Din Sihalwi, the greatest family of teachers of the age, would constantly be infused and guided, refreshed and enriched by the spiritual example of ‘Abd al-Razzaq—for them the ideal would be that a proper balance between formal knowledge and spiritual insight ought to be the furbishment of the well-formed scholar. On the other hand, it meant that the most vigorous Sufi movement of the region was to have the stamp of approval of its leading learned family.

The Islamic outlook which came to be shared between Farangi Mahall and Bansa was of more than merely Awadhi significance. It was spread beyond the region by the expansion of the Qadiri-Razzaqi silsila that we have sketched out above, although not all those who might pay court at Bansa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—for instance, Ahmad Rada Khan Barelwi or Haji Warith ‘Ali Shah Dewi—followed closely in the tradition set down by Shah ‘Abd al-Razzaq. More importantly, it was spread beyond the region by the expanding influence of the Farangi Mahall family. There was the movement of the family into other parts of India in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, important bases being established in Rampur, Madras and Hyderabad, as well as lesser ones in madrasas throughout northern India. There was its scholarship expressed in the many hundreds of books they wrote, some of which found their way to the Middle East. There were its many hundreds of pupils by the early nineteenth century whose names lie scattered in manuscript lists, biographies and other writings belonging to the family. We recall once more Ghulam ‘Ali Azad Bilgrami’s statement that most of the silsilas of teaching in India stretch back to Mulla Qutb al-Din Sihalwi. The family’s impact in northern India, moreover, was intensified by the development of a powerful offshoot, another great school specialising in ma‘qulat scholarship, that of Khayrabad in western Awadh, whose notable scholars were Mulla Muhammad ‘Alam Faruqi of Sandila (d. 1783), and Fadl-i Imam (d. 1828) and Fadl-i Haqq Khayrabadi (d. 1861). Indeed, there is enough evidence to suggest that amongst the educated ashraf this was a widely followed way of being Muslim, perhaps the most widely followed way, until the mid-nineteenth century.

The attraction of the Farangi Mahalli/Banswi way declined under the impact of Muslim revivalism and the imposition of the colonial state. The emphasis on ma‘qulat in scholarship grew less, in part as ‘ulama turned to manqulat, the revealed sciences, to bolster up the community its loss of power, and in part as the British began to require educational achievement in Western rather than in Islamic learning as qualification to enter goverment service. The appeal of Sufism, and in particular that informed by Ibn ‘Arabi, withered as religious revivalism blazed away at practices which seemed to threaten the oneness of

God (tawhid) and as the acquisition of English education brought a process of 'disenchantment', of rational understandings of the world. Thus, the Farangi Mahalli/Banswi tradition, and its moderation, gave way to the nineteenth-century movement of revival and reform, and its harsher Islamic prescriptions. By the same token it gave way to a movement which owed much to the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century achievements of Delhi's Madrasa-yi Rahimiyya and Mazhar Jan-i Janan.[45]

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[45] For a wide-ranging analysis of the changing position of the Delhi and Lucknow schools, see 'Perso-Islamic Culture in India from the Seventeenth to the Early Twentieth Century', *supra*.

CHAPTER THREE

The 'Ulama of Farangi Mahall and Their Adab[1]

> Watch me. So long as I follow our pious predecessors, follow me; and if I do not follow our pious predecessors, do not follow me. Our predecessors were better than we are, because they lived closer to the time of the Holy Prophet.[2]

Thus Mawlana 'Abd al-Razzaq spoke to the Farangi Mahall family. He was telling them that, if they wished to live a perfect and well-formed life, he was the model they should follow, that he exemplified the family code of adab or right conduct. Our concern is with this code of adab, which 'Abd al-Razzaq and other learned and holy men of the Farangi Mahall family exemplified. To focus on a family rather than on a profession may seem to be stretching a point, but we start from the premise that in a great family, tightly knit down the ages by circumstances and by marriage custom, it is possible to discern as distinctive a form of

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[1] I should like to thank the learned men of Farangi Mahall, in particular Mawlanas Jamal Miyan, Matin Miyan, Mufti Rada Ansari, and Mawlwi 'Abd al-Rahman Sahib, for taking me into their world. At their hands I have learnt much, and not only about Islam and Farangi Mahall. I should also like to thank Messrs. Kamal Habib and 'Aqil al-Zafar Khan for spending time so generously in helping me with translation and for a gloss worthy of the 'ulama, themselves. Moreover, I acknowledge with much gratitude the financial support of the British Academy, the Hayter and Central Research Fund of London University, and the Ernest Cassel Educational Trust, whose generosity has made possible the research from which this chapter is derived.

[2] Altaf al-Rahman Qidwa'i, *Anwar-i Razzaqiyya* (Lucknow: n.d.), p. 61.